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EPIC DRAMA.

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"A POLITICAL CRISIS" Fiction.

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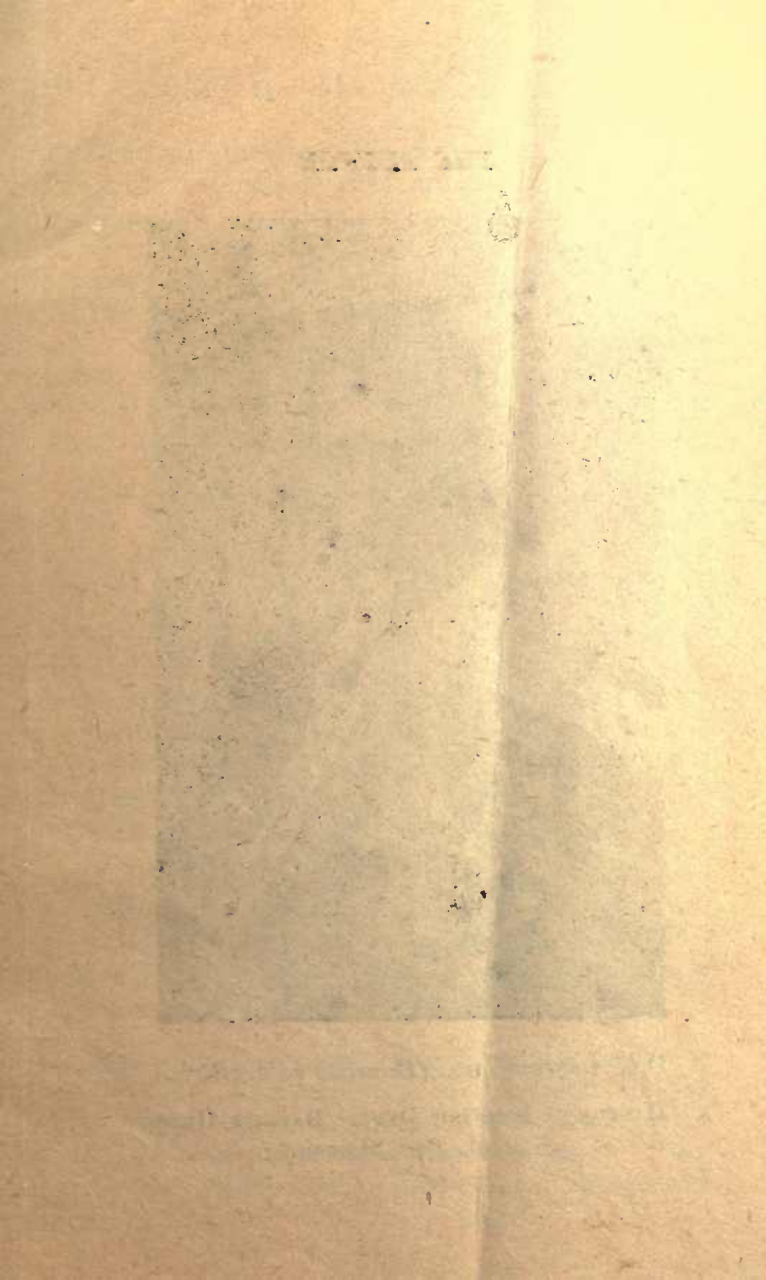
D. K. ONWENU, B.A. (*Dunelm*) F.I.C. (*Birm.*)

MASTER i/c ENGLISH DEPT.: BAPTIST
HIGH SCHOOL. Port Harcourt.

*"LET HIM WHOM THE CAP FITS,
WEAR IT."*

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THE AUTHOR



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INTRODUCTION.

IT seems to me that it is a duty incumbent on all literate people who are capable and have the inclination so to do, to record from time to time the political panorama of Nigeria either in the form of articles to be published in the press, or in the form of pamphlet which will be relatively cheap for, and easily obtainable by the reading public. A publication of this kind will certainly be of immense value not only to the present age, but also to the posterity.

This book, I dare say, is nothing short of an Epic Drama written at a time of national crisis in the history of a country struggling for self-rule, self determination, and nationhood.

Although in this drama, the scenery and the names of actors seem Nigerian, yet I would not like the spectators or my readers, for that matter, to identify the story as well as the plots, with the political crisis, which of late occurred in the Eastern Region of Nigeria, and which led to the Dissolution of the Eastern House of Assembly.

It will be committing a logical fallacy to argue that because the publication of this book seems simultaneous with the Eastern Nigeria Political crisis, therefore this book is a carbon-copy of the incidents of the Enugu political crisis.

In a plain language, the dramatis personae as well as the plots recorded in this book simply live in imagination; in short, the book is a dramatic fiction which portrays an imaginary "Political Crisis" which took place at an "imaginary time," and in an "imaginary place."

The book is an Epic Drama, the central character and hero of which is Mallam a National Leader and hero who, as a result of his sincere and selfless nationalism, without violence or bloodshed, delivered his country from the bogey of what one might call in political parlance, imperialism and its satellites, (stooges).

Many there were that enlisted to fight under the banner of this national hero at the initial stage of the battle, but as soon as the battle was joined, some acted the role of "Lot's wife" and looked back while their hands were already on the plough. Many of the deserters of this army of crusade were erstwhile faithful and renowned colonels and lieutenants in the army spear-headed by the National hero of this Drama. But it was a national calamity which brought about a country-wide mourning when these colonels and lieutenants became turn-coats.

Nevertheless, there were other colonels and lieutenants as well as the rest of the rank and file who stood firm, with, and were loyal and faithful to the National leader; these fought courageously till the victory was achieved. The country thence-forward sang the eulogy of this National hero and suite.

This Drama is both epic and didactic, and the full comprehension of its lessons, requires the ability to read between the lines.

However, suffice it to say that no nation can win glory and eminence, if her citizens are not prepared to sacrifice egoistic self on the alter of self realisation, or the rational social self.

D. K. Onwenu.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

1. Mallam : National President and Leader : the hero.
2. Bello : National Secretary
3. Raja : One of the torch-bearers of Malam's Leadership.
4. Okeke : Messenger
5. Golden water : Leader of the Central Ministers
6. Tofru : Regional Parliamentary Leader
7. One Minister
8. Talker : Deputy Parliamentary Leader
9. Sikamo : Minister without Portfolio
10. Okoli : Minister without Portfolio
11. Nwafo : Minister without Portfolio
(Medical Practitioner)
12. Mazi Boycott : Mallam's Lieutenant
13. Chairman Policy Committee
14. Chairman Discipline Committee (Mazi Boycott)
15. Mima
16. Fera
17. Amachrec
18. Tikuna : Regional Minister of Health
19. Atamuna : Regional Minister of Works
20. Erizomah : Regional Minister of Education
21. Ginger : Regional Minister of Local Government
22. Ubakoma : Regional Minister of Land and Survey
23. Aide de Camp : Sarkin's Private Secretary
24. Six Ministers : "SitTighters"
25. Sarkin : Official i/c of the Region
26. The Rev. Gentleman : An Assemblyman
27. Eyor : Mallam's Brigadier
28. Financial Secretary : Official
29. Zumba : Mallam's Lieutenant

30. Nippers : Mallam's Opponents
31. Junk : Chairman: Peace Committee
32. Nijikson : Central Minister
33. Announcer
34. Civil Secretary : Official
35. Zaga
36. Legal Secretary : Official
37. Policeman

SCENES

1. A Scene in Lagos
2. A meeting of the three Central Ministers. The Fourth Central Minister is away.
3. The meeting of the Regional Ministers and the Deputy Leader to discuss The Jos Convention
4. The Famous Jos Convention
5. Reports of the various Committees
6. The Reshufflement of the Ministries
7. Mr. Golden Water meets the Six Ministers and advises them to withdraw their resignations
8. The Six Ministers hurry to His Honour the Sarkin by night to withdraw their resignations, saying they had no intention to resign.
9. Mr. Golden Water meets the Six Ministers
10. Mallam goes to the Sarkin to hand over the resignations of the Ministers
11. The House of Assembly
12. The Sarkin uses his veto power to pass the Budget Bill
13. Ethical questions by Mallam

THE DISSOLUTION SCENE:-

14. The Peace Committee Sits
15. The Peace Committee deliberates : soon the two parties are called in
16. (a) The meeting of the House of Assembly
(b) The gallery is cleared. Mallam and other eminent spectators go out; some Assemblymen from the Maroon bloc leave their seats for the gallery
17. The Dissolution Day. The House Assembles as usual.
18. Victory Statement by Mallam.

A POLITICAL CRISIS : Fiction.

SCENE 1

A SCENE IN LAGOS.

Raja Hello ! Mr. Bello, welcome—How was P.H. ? How fared your meeting ?

Bello Pretty well but.....

Raja What "but" ? what decision did you arrive at ?

Bello Well, it was decided that the NCNC should continue to try the Macpherson constitution.

Raja You don't mean it ! NCNC of all parties, to continue to try the Macpherson constitution ? No, never ! But where were you Mr Mallam when this decision was being taken ? What did you say man ?

Mallam- Well, you know I am a lover of democracy, and I do my best to practise it. You know too that those who see red in whatever good I do for the freedom of this country often accuse me of being a dictator---which you are aware is far from my good name. You also know that I do not at any time hesitate in pointing out what is likely to set back the political hand of the clock of this country Nigeria, even though some people may be so vitiated with self interest that they are unable at that moment to appreciate the weighty meaning of my points there and then.

Raja- Well, now may I know what decision was taken at the meeting about the weakness of some of our ministers as well as some of them who have not been carrying out the party policy ?

Bello Yes, this point came up and the National President was asked to undertake upon himself for the good name of our party to reshuffle the ministries.

Raja That's right. But when is the President going to carry out this decision ?

Bello I am inclined to think that the President would prefer carrying out this decision about reshuffle-ment in council. And I agree with him, because, if he does it alone, let alone that he has been mandated to do so, the fault-finders are likely to have the opportunity of falsely accusing him more and more of despotism.

Raja Well now, do you know what ? "Procrastination is a lazy man's apology." The best thing that we can do now, is to write to all the branches of the NCNC, and sound their opinion about this bogus decision of the N.E.C. at P.H. i.e. to continue to give a trial to the Macpherson constitution. No political party which is dynamic and hopes to win freedom and independence for Nigeria in 1956, will take such a decision.

Bello (Mr. Bello writes all the branches of the NCNC)

NCNC, Headquarters,
Date.

Dear party members and compatriots,

You must have heard the decision reached at the NEC, held recently at P.H. It was decided there that the NCNC should continue to give the Macpherson Constitution a fair trial. This decision is considered by all progressive elements in the rank and file of our political party as unprogressive, and a retrogression from our goal, and from our dedication to the freedom and independence of our country, at most in 1956.

We would like you to comment on this decision, and if you disagree state what line of action you would like us to take here and now.

Yours sincerely,
Bello.
(National Sec.)

Mr Okeke Mr. Secretary, you have a lot of mails today.

Bello Thank you,
Bring them here. Yes, replies to my letters to all the branches of the NCNC regarding the N.E.C. decision at P.H.
All the branches are of one mind that a special meeting be convened to discuss this matter once again, and to reshuffle the ministries too.

(Bello Consults Mallam and Executive Committee.)

Mallam- According to the NCNC constitution, it is the convention alone that has the power to scrap off or ratify the decision of the NEC (National Executive Committee.)

Bello I am now authorised to issue out invitation to all the NCNC branches to a convention that will be held at Jos in December 1952.
The agenda are (1) to consider the decision taken at the NEC held last at PH i.e. to continue to give a fair trial to the Macpherson constitution, and (2) to reshuffle the Eastern Regional Ministries.

SCENE 2.

A MEETING OF THREE CENTRAL MINISTERS.

Golden water - One of us is away, of course, we do not have to bother about his presence, because, if he were present he might not agree with us, rather he agrees to whatever the NCNC and its leadership say.

Well now, my fellow state ministers, we have done a lot to convince our fellow ministers in the Region not to attend the Jos convention. After all, these common people must realise that we the ministers have all the power in our hand. It beats me

to hear people talk of the NCNC and its leadership. They seem to forget that that phrase means the people that matter. Why can't the common people read between the lines to know that in the East, the NCNC means the ministers and Parliamentary leadership, some of the Assemblymen, and the common people who are prepared to nod their assent to the policy formulated by the Honourable ministers who have the best brains in the country?

Do you know what? Here's a letter I have drafted read it and sign, so that we send it to the Jos convention as a body. It reads:—

The Council of Ministers,

Date.

Dear President,

We feel that our presence at the Jos convention may awe the delegates so much that they may not have the nerve to air their opinions freely, we therefore deliberately keep away to allow you take your "patriotic" decision. Besides, we are so busy with the affairs of the State now that we cannot afford the time to attend your meeting.

Yours faithfully,

The three central Ministers.

1. Mr. Golden Water.
2. Mr. Lecturer : Power.
3. Mr. Anthropology.

SCENE 3.

The meeting of the Eastern Regional Ministers and The Deputy Leader of the Govt. to discuss the Jos convention.

Mr Tofru- Gentlemen, you have all been invited to the special convention at Jos, and I hope you all know that the two most important points they are

going to discuss there are:—

- (1) That the Macpherson constitution should no longer be given a fair trial, and
- (2) That the ministries should be reshuffled.

One Minister- What ! Repeat the second point—

Mr Tofru- That the ministries should be reshuffled.

One Minister- To reshuffle the ministries ! That is impossible !

Mr Talker- You listen, I have just received a letter from Lagos, and I believe there is a similar letter addressed to us as a body. The Ministers in Lagos have decided not to attend the Jos convention and I think that the best thing we can do, is to take the same decision, and even go to the length of making a propaganda dissuading others from attending that meeting. After all, if the ministers and those of us who matter are not there at that meeting, any decision reached in that meeting will not be binding on us, and will even carry no weight.

Sikamo- My Parliamentary Leader, Deputy Leader, Honourable and fellow ministers. I am one of the ministers without portfolio. I cannot understand what is going on, and why we are assembled here to waste our time. The constitution as well as the Govt. is ours. Isn't it ?

Answer Yes !

Between now and 1956, the time for another election, all the power is concentrated in our hands. Are you aware of that ?

Answer Yes, we are.

Why should we bother ourselves to listen to, and to take instruction from the people who are outside our Regional legislature : people from the West.

They have asked us to attend the meeting at Jos. What are the points to be discussed there ?

- (1) That the Macpherson constitution should no longer be given a fair trial. Consider this point. What care we about that, whether the constitution is given a fair trial any longer or not. Suffice it to say that we have been appointed ministers, and there can be no revoking this appointment until or after 1956. And, dear me ! if we remain in office till 1956, shall we not have been all right economically ?

Answer

Sure !

- (2) That the ministries should be reshuffled ! Is it not a mere political harangue ? Here is our Parliamentary Leader as well as the Deputy Leader. Here are we the ministers too. Can there be any reshuffling of the ministries without the consensus of opinion of us all ?

Answer

No !

And you talk of NCNC and its leadership, and Jos convention; what is the NCNC ? By the way, how many of us sincerely profess to be members ? Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! because we signed a pledge to be loyal to the NCNC just as a means of getting our ministerial appointments, therefore we should rightly be regarded as NCNCers ? You can all agree with me that as soon as an attempt is made to reshuffle the regional ministries, we denounce the NCNC and its leadership. Honourable ministers dare we attend the Jos convention ?

Answer

No !

Mr Tofru- We have all agreed to boycott the Jos convention—None of us will put up appearance there. We are even so busy with the affairs of our portfolios, that we cannot be there.

TWO OF THE MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO:-

Mr. Okoli- Mr. Nwafor and I, ministers without portfolio, have a different view altogether. We all swore allegiance to our party the NCNC and its leadership before we were elected to this office. Why should we play the role of infidels? We want to be frank, we are prepared to attend the Jos Convention.

Mr. Nwafor- Honourable and fellow ministers, Mr Deputy Leader, I rise to support in toto, the statement of the Hon. Mr Okoli, my fellow minister without portfolio. All the ministers swore loyalty to the NCNC and its leadership before we were elected to office.

Our word is our bond. We must either attend the Jos convention, or be prepared for consequences political or social. As for me, I have set my hand on the plough and there's no looking back. I will attend the Jos convention, except otherwise pre-engaged in national affairs, in which case my absence must have been permitted by our National Leader.

OTHER REGIONAL MINISTERS.

Mr. Tofru- We have decided not to attend the Jos convention just as our fellow Central Ministers have done, and if any one of us disobeys us, and attends the meeting, we shall force him to resign the ministry.

SCENE 4. THE JOS CONVENTION.

Mallam- Before I declare this meeting open, we would like to know who the delegates are, and what branches they represent. I now call upon the National Secretary to call the roll.

Bello - The National Secretary calls the roll. National President Dr. Mallam, (present); Mazi Boycott (present); Mazi Ogbujiakpa (present), Officers of the NCNC from the West (present), Officers from the North (present), Delegates from the West (present), Delegates from the North (present), Officers from the East (present), Delegates from the East (present), Central Ministers (absent), Eastern Regional Ministers (absent; only one present i.e. Mr. Okoli; Minister without portfolio. Mr. Nwafor another minister without portfolio is absent on permission from the National President. He is on tour of national interest). Deputy Leader Eastern Region (absent).

Mallam- Countrymen, comrades-in-arms, loyal party men. I welcome you all to Jos for this very important special convention of our party the NCNC. I have to say that after the National Executive Committee at Port Harcourt a few months ago, violent criticisms were made on the decisions arrived at in that meeting from both within and outside our party. And, in conformity with our party constitution, part of which states that it is only the Party convention that has the power to ratify or scrap the decisions of the NEC; this special convention has been called. I therefore wish us all God's guidance, the spirit of equity and tolerance in all our deliberations in this convention so that our decisions and resolutions may be for the over-all good, and such as will expedite our march to Self-government and nationhood. I now call upon Mazi Boycott to outline the programme for this convention.

Mazi Boycott- Mr. President, my fellow conventionists. It is indeed an onerous duty to map out the skeleton programme for this convention. However, we have all sworn to do any duty assigned to

us in the interest of our party and country. In order to facilitate and expedite our work in this convention, it is necessary to divide the House into Committees, to each of which a specific duty will be assigned.

We shall have the Policy Formulating Committee, the Discipline Committee as well as the Committee for the revision of the Party's constitution. Each of these ad hoc Committees will have its chairman and secretary whose report will be submitted to the meeting of the whole House for scrutiny and adoption.

But, in connection with Finance, the whole House will be resolved into a committee. Mr President, my task is done.

(Applause).

Mallam- Is it the wish of the House that we adopt this programme?

Answer- Aye!

Mallam- Then let us go at once into committees. The house is therefore adjourned till tomorrow.

SCENE 5. REPORTS OF VARIOUS COMMITTEES.

We are assembled once again gentlemen to hear the report of the various working committee.

May I call upon the chairman of the Policy committee to report on their findings.

CHAIRMAN : POLICY COMMITTEE.

Mr. President, party men. Our report is a longish one, but there are a few recommendations we would like the House to consider and if possible, to adopt here and now. They are :-

(1) That the NCNC as a party boycotts all official cocktail parties, official parades, coronation celebrations, as well as the singing of the British National Anthem, and such other displays as tend to perpetuate the status quo of the British Imperialism.

(2) That we welcome the British as well as other aliens as friends, but not as overlords who regard us as their servants; hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Mallam- Thank you, I now call upon the chairman of the committee for the revision of the constitution to give his own reports.

THE CHAIRMAN FOR REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

Mr. President, party men. We have many recommendations to make, but we would like the House to consider the following salient points:-

(1) That if a Local Branch suspends or expels a member, such suspension or expulsion can only be regarded as effective when it is ratified by the Headquarters (NCNC).

(2) No Member is eligible for election unless he has been an active member for two years at least.

(3) In the rank and file of the party, punishments shall be levied according to the offence viz:—
Warning, Suspension and expulsion.

Mallam. Thank you. I now call upon the chairman of the Discipline Committee to give his own reports.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE:-

Mr. President, party men, comrades-in-arms. If there is anything that lubricates the machinery of any organization, political, religious or social for

smooth running, it is discipline.

It is a measuring rod which keeps up the ethics of any society, or organization, so that every member cultivates the spirit of self-respect, tolerance—live and let live.

In short, it is the etiquette of an organization, described by an eminent philosopher as “a contribution of individual bests to the common treasury of excellence.” Let loose the discipline of any society, or organization, and it becomes a bedlam.

2. Mr. President, we feel that discipline in our party has become loose, and we recommend that the string should be retugged for the common good.

3. The behaviour of the three Central Ministers is anything but satisfactory. All along, their public utterances and activities, to a certain extent, has been derogatory to the moral esteem of the NCNC and its leadership.

The patches are now too many. Their joint letter to our National President has not only added insult to our injury, but has also been a sheer display of rudeness and animalism. The catalogue of the invidious past performances of these Central Ministers is now voluminous, and staggers imagination.

4. We, therefore, Mr. President and party men, recommend that these three Central Ministers be expelled forthwith.

Mallam: Gentlemen, you have heard the recommendations of the various sub-committees. Will somebody move the acceptance of the recommendations for discussion?

Mima: Mr. President, I move that these recommendations be accepted for discussion.

Fera Seconded.

Mallam. Any counter motion ?

Answer. None.

Mallam: Those in favour of the motion ? The whole house.
The motion is therefore carried nem com.

Mallam. Gentlemen, may I invite your views on the recommendations tabled before us.

Mima: Mr. President, we are satisfied with the recommendations tabled before us, therefore I move that these recommendations be adopted for action.

Fera: Seconded.

Mallam: Any counter motion ? None. Those in favour of the motion show by raising of hands. The whole House. The motion therefore passes the House.

Mima: Mr. President, I move that this house be adjourned.

Fera: Seconded.

Mallam: Any amendment, or counter motion ? None. Is it the wish of the House that we adjourn ?

Answer: Yes.

Mallam: The House is now adjourned sine die.

SCENE 6. Scene at Enugu : Reshufflement Of The Ministries.

Mallam: Honourable Ministers, Assemblymen, comrades-in-arms ; we are assembled here to review the work of the past in the light of the present, and to plan for the future.

2. Some of our Ministers have surely done their best, but we are sorry to say that others have not lived up to expectation ; in short they have failed to carry out the party policy.

It is a general feeling that the Parliamentary leadership has shown a sign of weakness, and the regional ministries therefore, should be reshuffled. In this respect, I would ask you all to submerge self for the development of the over-all good. Our concern is with the unity and freedom of the independent Nigeria.

Mr. Amashree: Mr. President, Honourable ministers, comrades-in-arms. At the National Executive Committee held at Port Harcourt last year, it was agreed that the NCNC Eastern Government and its leadership should be reshuffled. The National President was mandated to do it alone, but as it is the pleasure of the President that he would do it in council, we very much appreciate this move, and in order to do the reshuffling effectively, we had better call upon the Honourable Ministers to resign here and now. Isn't it the constitutional procedure, gentlemen?

Answer: Yes, it is.

Mallam: Honourable Ministers, in view of all that we have said may we now call upon you to resign your portfolios formally.

RESIGNATION AFTER SOME HESITATION.

Tofru. The National President, comrades-in-arms, the verdict of weakness has been passed on my Parliamentary leadership. In respect of the ideal of our party the NCNC, and for the proper working of the machinery of our Government which seeks for the unity, freedom, and the independence of Nigeria, I hereby resign my portfolio as the Minister of Natural Resources, and I also subscribe my goodwill to this necessary reshuffling.

Members applaud: Hear! Hear!!

Okoli. Mr. President in obedience to the direction of my

party, I hereby resign my ministry, as the Minister without portfolio.

Members: Hear ! Hear !!

Nwafor: In the very words of my fellow minister without portfolio, I hereby resign my ministry.

Members: Hear ! Hear !!

Sikamo: I am a minister without portfolio. Some of my colleagues have resigned, but I find it difficult to follow suit. I had calculated how much I would earn until 1956.

I have just bought a kit-car, and have been contemplating to buy a launch to ply in the Creek between Port Harcourt and my home town, and you ask me to resign, I appeal to all of you here, how can I resign ?

Okoli: Mr. President, permit me to say that if Honourable Sikamo has not yet made up his mind, let him give way to others to resign, we have no time to waste.

Sikamo: Please, Mr. President, I seem to have forgotten what we are here for. If this House still demands it, well I resign my ministry.

Members: Hear ! Hear !!

Tikuna. My National Leader, I hope you will remember I had little experience as a worker before I was given this portfolio as a minister of Health. I had hoped I would enjoy my portfolio for 5 years, at least. I bought many things on credit; and, how can I pay for them within the time I promised to do so? Well, I ask you to have mercy on me, and find ways and means to help me. Well, I hereby resign my portfolio.

Members. Hear ! Hear !!

Atamuna. Mr. President, in obedience to the decision of

my bloc as well as my party, I hereby resign my portfolio as the minister of Works.

Members. Hear ! Hear ! !

Erizomah. Mr President, before I resign, I would like to make it abundantly clear, that as an educationist, I have worked in various capacities as the Principal of a renowned College, as well as General Manager of Schools. I cannot think of any body else more qualified than I to hold the portfolio of the ministry of Education. However, in obedience to the decision of my party, the NCNC, I hereby resign my portfolio.

Members: Hear ! Hear ! !

Ginger. My Parliamentary Leader, what do you say ? Do you want me to resign my portfolio ? I am the Minister of Local Government; so, I shall resign ?

Tofru. Well, Mr. Minister of Local Government, I should advise you to obey your conscience and do what other ministers have done.

Ginger. You see, my National President, I was just making an arrangement to give municipality status to all the townships in this region, in conformity to the policy paper drawn up and given to me by my party, the NCNC. If I resign now, who is going to carry out this policy as effectively and as expeditiously as I should have done ? Well, my Leader, since you want me to resign, I had better do so. Here is my resignation.

Members. Hear ! Hear ! !

Ubakoma. My National President, do you really want me to resign ? Please, consider my condition which is unlike that of others. I have lost my clients, and what else am I going to do ? I bow down before you, and ask you to allow me to retain my portfolio even though others resign. What do you say gentlemen ?

Members i.e. The Committee—Resign like others !

Ubakoma. Well, Mr President, don't forget me, please; and if you assure me that you will still consider me for a ministerial appointment, well, I resign my portfolio.

Members: Hear ! Hear !!

Mallam. Partymen, comrades-in-arms, I thank you very much for complying with the decision of our party. We hope you will continue to be loyal and faithful to our party the NCNC, for the over-all good of our dear country Nigeria.

Tomorrow, early in the morning, Mr. Tofru, the former Parliamentary Leader and ex-minister of Natural Resources and I, shall together go to His Honour, the Sarkin, in the Govt. House to present these resignation papers. What do you say, Mr. Tofru ?

Tofru. Willingly, however, till then.

Mallam. Gentlemen, the House is adjourned.

SCENE 7. Mr. Golden Water meets the Six Ministers.
Salutation.

Golden water. My fellow ministers what do you mean ? Why are you so cowed down to accept any decision from people who are outside our Govt.? Why should you accept dictation from the West, as well as from the people who are inferior to you ?

Tofru. Well, you see, my dear, we have resigned, and there's no way out of it. The constitution does not make any provision for withdrawal after a minister has resigned.

Golden water. Resignation! Withdrawal! What do you mean? Of course, you are all laymen. Listen, and get this advise from me, and if you go by it, you will see exactly that my advise and what the Govt. legal adviser will tell you, are identical. All you can do now, is to hurry to His Honour, the Sarkin, and tell him that you had no intention to resign, and that you have withdrawn your resignations.

Tofru. Is it possible? Do you mean it?

Golden water. I am the Govt., and, if you want to prove it, obey, and carry out my advice.

SCENE 8. The Six Ministers hurry to His Honour The Sarkin, by night in order to withdraw their resignations, saying they had no intention to resign.

The Six Ministers knock.

Aide de Camp. Who is that?

Six ministers. It is we, your obedient servants.

Aide de Camp. Whom do you want?

Six Ministers. His Honour, the Sarkin.

Aide de Camp. He is in bed, and cannot see you now.

Six ministers. Please, by all means we want to see him, Urgent; we want to see him. Thank you sir, in advance.

Aide de Camp. Well, let me see if it is possible. (The Aide de camp returns, and says:) Come in and sit down.

The Sarkin Enters; The Ministers Stand Up.

Sarkin: Sit down. Why have you come to me at such an odd hour of the night?

You are all panting. What's wrong? You look like people who are on the way to lose their posts and daily bread.

Tofru. Your Honour, you have read us well psychologically. We are very anxious, for some ill wishers of ours want us to lose our daily bread. In short, they have forced us to resign our portfolios, but we want to tell you that we want to withdraw our resignations, because we had no intention to resign. We beg your Honour to consider our case.

Sarkin. Well, your resignations have not reached me, but when they come, I am prepared to agree to your withdrawal.

Six ministers together. Thank Sir, thank sir, Oh, pardon. Thank Your Honour; Yes sir!

SCENE 9. Mr. Golden Water meets the Six Ministers.

Golden Water. (Salutes the ministers) Hello! Hello!
How goes it?

The Six Ministers. All's well.

Golden water. What is the result of your interview with the Sarkin?

The Six Ministers together. Excellent! Grand! Successful! We are very thankful to you, our saviour.
What next are we going to do?

Golden water. Oh! just sit tight! Nothing else will happen.

The six ministers together. Oh! we sit tight! We sit tight!
Nothing else will happen.

SCENE 10. Mallam goes to Sarkin to hand over the Resignations of the Ministers.

Mallam. It is now 8 a.m., but Mr Tofru has not come, according to plan. It was agreed last night that both of us should go to His Honour, the Sarkin, this morning, to present the resignations of the Regional Ministers,

CENE 11. **THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.**

The members are seated in their places. The six Ministers continue to sit on the Govt. Bench.

Aide de Camp. The Sarkin! (All stand up).

The Sarkin. Honourable Ministers, Assemblymen, we shall ask the Rev. Gentleman here present to lead us in opening prayer.

The Rev. Gentleman— Let us pray. Go before us good Lord and guide us in our deliberations for thy name's sake, and for the good of our country and mankind, for Christ's sake. A M E N .

The Sarkin. The House is now declared open for business.

Eyor. Your Honour, we would like you to clarify the position of the Eastern Govt. ministry. All the ministers have resigned, but we cannot understand why these six ministers still sit on the Government Bench.

The Six Ministers together: We have withdrawn our resignations. We sit tight. No resignation!

Sikamo- Your Honour, we had no intention to resign, so we have withdrawn our resignation. I am the Headmaster of one rural school; if I resign and go back to my profession, how can I pay for my car? I have no alternative, but to sit tight.

Igbaki- Your Honour, it is difficult to get some body else as learned as I, and capable of taking my ministerial post. Besides, what about these new mansions which we occupy as ministers? How can we pack away from them in so short a time as this?

Yes, lest I forget, if we resign, we have to surrender our Buick and Lemosene cars specially imported for us from America.

Well, my comrades, what do you say? As for me, I am sitting tight. Comrades, have you the intention to resign?

The Six ministers together. No. Never. We sit tight.

The Sarkin- Honourable Ministers, Assemblymen, I have accepted the resignation of the Minister of works as well as that of the two Ministers without portfolio! I therefore declare these three seats vacant.

BILLS : THE BUDGET BILL.

Financial Sec. Your Honour, I rise to move the adoption of the Budget Bill which the Honourable Ministers and the Assemblymen have duly perused and scrutinised. There is no doubt that this Bill if passed, will bring this Region a new economic hope and salvation. I move the passing of this Bill, Your Honour.

Golden Water- Your Honour, I second the motion for this Bill.

Zumba- Your Honour, whether this Budget Bill will bring us to heaven or Paradise, in as much as the House is not properly constituted, I, on behalf of the NCNC, oppose it with vehemence. I therefore counter move that this Bill be not accepted by this House.

Eyor- Seconded.

Sarkin- Those in favour of the counter motion show by raising hands. NCNC 60. Those against? Nippers 17. The motion for the Budget Bill therefore falls.

I therefore move for adjournment.

Eyor - Seconded.

Sarkin- Those in favour of the motion for adjournment show by the raising of hands. NCNC 60. Those against? Nippers 17. The House is therefore adjourned.

SCENE 12. The Passing of the Budget Bill by Veto Power.

Sarkin- Mr Financial Secretary, bring me the Budget Bill, which was rejected by the overwhelming majority of the NCNC members of the House.
I hereby use my veto power to pass it.
(He signs his name.)

**THE SIX EXPELLED MINISTERS & OTHER NIPPERS
NEARBY READ FROM THE PAPER THE
PASSING OF THE BUDGET BILL.**

The Nippers together. Hear! Hear! The Budget Bill is passed. Surely, the Nippers must win the Government.

SCENE 13. ETHICAL QUESTIONS BY MALLAM.

Mallani. Ladies and gentlemen, comrades-in-arms, have you ever seen a govt. in which the minority lords it over the majority?

Answer No!

Where ministerial appointment is taken to be a civil service?

Answer No!

Ladies and gentlemen, Democracy de Luxe!

THE DISSOLUTION SCENE.

The Peace Committee hears the N. C. N. C. and
the Nippers Representatives

Junk (Chairman : Peace Committce.)

Junk- Gentlemen, we are here assembled to listen to the representatives of the NCNC and the Nippers, who have for a long time now been at such a loggers-head as tends to bring disreputation to, and casts a slur on our region. We pray that each and every one of you from either side may submerge his egoistic self for the over-all good of our dear country. Let us take it that at this stage, it is not "too late to mend." We urge you to speak from your heart of hearts your grievances, and, believing in tolerance and equity, we hope to be able to right your wrongs and to effect a compromise.

I now call upon Mr. Mallam to give evidence for his side, the NCNC.

Mallam- Mr Chairman, gentlemen; on behalf of myself, and of my party, the NCNC, I thank you immensely for the trouble you have taken to play the role of a go-between in order to bring peace between the top notchers of the Nip and my party the NCNC. I want to make it abundantly clear that the primary objective of my party, the NCNC, is Self-government for Nigeria before, or latest in 1956. To this goal, our life is dedicated.

Our fight is inherently not between ourselves, but between the lovers of freedom for Nigeria and British. Imperialism; and I must have to add that in this battle, "He that is not for us, is against us;" and John Ploughman well says it "Him whom the cap fits, let him wear it."

In my evidence, I have the following points to make:-

- (i) My former colleagues of the NCNC, particularly their leaders, defied our party leadership on many occasions, and conspired with otherwise loyal members of our party and known enemies of the N.C.N.C., and by subversive activities did their utmost to sabotage and to destroy the NCNC as a political party in Nigeria and the Cameroons.
- (ii) These people defied the NCNC in respect of selection of Ministers.
- (iii) They defied the party in respect of the decision "to walk out," arrived at a joint meeting of the Working Committee of the NCNC and the Eastern Parliamentary Committee in the House of Representatives, regarding Mr Zumba's Lagos Merger Motion.
- (iv) They defied the Party in respect of its attitude towards the present constitution.
- (v) They defied the party in respect of the summoning of the Jos convention.
- (vi) They defied the constituting of the Jos Special Convention and its decision inspite of their pledge to the NCNC when they joined that party.
- (vii) They defied the party in respect of the resignations of the nine Regional Ministers.
- (viii) They defied the party in respect of the payment of levy thereby depriving it of revenue to sustain itself.

Junk- Mazi Zumba has a few words to say before I call upon the other side to give evidence.

Zumba- It is difficult for me to say anything else in addition to the evidence of my National Leader, however, there are two important points I need pointing out viz:—

- i. Lack of co-ordination between the Parliamentary Committee and the Eastern Regional Ministers.
- ii. I also criticise vehemently the Management of the Scholarship Scheme and the distribution of the membership of the various Boards. The details, Mr. Chairman, can be better imagined than explained.

Junk- I now call upon Mr Nijikson to give evidence for his side the Nip.

Nijikson- Mr. Chairman, members of the Peace Committee, In view of the pressure for time, I propose to speak briefly.

On behalf of my colleagues and me, I vehemently complain of the attacks directed towards us in the newspapers on matters which have not been referred to us for our views, and even on other matters on which we have reached agreement in the Party. In connection with our failure to attend the Jos convention, our letter to the National President of the NCNC is self-explanatory. We do not think that the Regional Ministers deserve to be dismissed; besides, the National President of the NCNC, is not easily approachable.

Erizomah- Mr. Chairman, in support of what my fellow Nipper has said, and in refutation of certain accusations levelled on us by the spokesman of the NCNC Party, I hereby produce the receipts of a few shillings and pence paid to the NCNC funds by my colleagues and me. I feel that the National Executive Committee of the NCNC has been interfering unnecessarily in the affairs of the Parliamentary Committee. I also emphasise the point that the decision of the NEC, held at Port Harcourt to reshuffle the ministerial portfolios, does not mean mass dismissal of the Regional Ministers.

- Ubakoma - Mr Chairman, members of the Peace Committee, I have not got much to add to what my fellow Nippers have said; but, this much I shall say, and that is : that the solution of problem in the East can be found by the Ibos.
- Junk- Thank you, gentlemen. We shall then crave your indulgence by asking you to retire to a corner for a few minutes so that this Committee may deliberate, and call you once again to listen to our findings.

THE PEACE COMMITTEE DELIBERATES. SOON THE TWO PARTIES ARE CALLED IN—

Announcer- The two parties are now called in—Come in !

Junk- Gentlemen, we have considered all the charges and counter-charges made by both groups, and found that the fundamental differences lie in the following:—

(a) Lack of proper Liaison between-

- i. The NCNC Eastern Parliamentary Committee, and the NCNC National Executive Committee.
- ii. The NCNC Eastern Parliamentary Committee, and the Eastern Regional Ministers.
- iii. The Three Central Ministers and the Eastern Regional Ministers on the one hand, and the National President on the other.

(b) The allegations of corrupt practices indulged in by the Hon. members with a view to swaying the Party loyalty.

This makes it impossible for any Government in the East to-day to be assured of a consistent working majority over a considerable length of time.

- (c) Petty jealousy between Hon. members.
- (d) The house has unconsciously evolved a Party system of Govt. without the necessary provision for it during the elections.

- (e) The refusal of the Ministers to attend the Jos Convention without a convincing reason.
- (f) The drastic action taken by the Jos Convention in expelling the Ministers.

Conclusion:- We deeply regret the fact that the House as it is now constituted is in its lowest depths. We have given considerable thought to all suggestions and proposals made to us regarding ways and means of rescuing the Region. We have regrettably come to the conclusion that only the most drastic measures will revive the hopes of the people of the Eastern Region in their desperate desire to see a stable and honest Government.

Our recommendation is that the Eastern House of Assembly should be dissolved forthwith. In making this recommendation, we are convinced that we are expressing the ardent wish of all men of integrity in the Region.

This is our recommendation gentlemen, and we hope you will take it in good part.

THANK YOU.

SCENE 15 **THE MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF
ASSEMBLY.**

The Six Ministers "Sit-tight" on the Govt. Bench.

The Assemblymen are also seated.

The Gallery is filled up too.

Aide de Camp— **THE SARKIN !**

(All Stand, and sit after the SARKIN is seated)

Civil Secretary—Your Honour, Hon. Ministers, Assemblymen. Although this item is not on the Programme, however, I crave your indulgence to make a motion to the effect that Mr Atamuna erstwhile Minister of works, but who unfortunately for himself has resigned, should be reinstated.

Golden Water- Your Honour, I rise to second this motion.

Zumba- Your Honour, I rise to make a counter motion. There can be no equivocation in what we have been saying. How can we entertain motions when the Government is improperly constituted? No, never! not within the pale of democracy. I therefore, your Honour, counter move in view of my preamble, that Mr Atamuna be not reinstated.

EYOR- Seconded, Your Honour.

Sarkin- The question is now put. Those in favour of the counter motion show by the raising of hands.

N.C.N.C. 45.

Those for the motion? Nippers 32.

The motion therefore falls. Mr. Atamuna will not be reinstated.

A shout from the Gallery made by a person (Mr. Zaga) who obtained a seat by the ticket of Mr Ginger.

Zaga— Zik! Zik! Zik!
Zik my father; Zik must reign.

The Legal Secretary advises the Sarkin to clear the gallery:-

Sarkin- Who is making that noise?

Legal Secretary- Your Honour, I should suggest that you order that the gallery be cleared of all that sit there

Sarkin- I now use my power to order the police men to clear the gallery of all that are sitting there, and if this is not carried out forthwith I leave this House.

Policeman—Come on; everybody get down. His Honour has ordered so. (The gallery is cleared, Mallam and other eminent spectators go out. Some Assemblymen from the Maroon bloc leave their seats for the gallery because the motion to reinstate Mr Atamuna is defeated by the N.C.N.C. majority.)

Sarkin- Gentlemen, business as usual.

Tofru- Your Honour, I rise to move a motion of national importance. It is, "That this House accepts as its primary objective self-government in 1956; and that a special Committee be set up for working out the details, and for consultation with other Regions as soon as possible."

Talker- Seconded-

Eyor- Your Honour I am surprised to see people go about with brazen face where they ought to have been ashamed of themselves and of their remote and immediate utterances and performances. What are we doing here, Your Honour? Mr. Tofru of the Nippers who sat tight unabashed the other day in the House of Representatives when the NCNCers and the Action Groupers walked out in protest, against the dilatory motion made by Mr Amaduh from the North in order to kill the Self-Government Bill. Is he converted to reason in this wise? What! Is he making this motion to redeem their already lost face and honour? Your Honour, we pray that Mr Tofru and those of his ilk should be well advised. This House is not intended for those who are as changeable as chameleon. It is a House for people whose words are their bonds; for people who are prepared through thick and thin, to lead this country to her desired haven. Your Honour, let us come to business; I move that the House be adjourned.

Zumba- Your Honour, I rise to second the motion for adjournment.

Sarkin- Those in favour of the motion, show by the raising of hands. N. C. N. C. 45.

Those against? Nippers 17. The House is therefore adjourned.

SCENE 16. THE DISSOLUTION DAY.

(THE HOUSE ASSEMBLES AS USUAL)

Aide de camp Sarkin !

(All stand up, and sit after the Sarkin is seated.)

Civil Secretary—Hon. Ministers, Assemblymen, It is my duty to read to you, here assembled, a message from His Honour, the Sarkin. Please, lend me your ears—

“In view of the unworkable machinery of the government of the Eastern Region, which is the outcome of the present crisis; and in view of the prayer directed by the Hon. members of the House of Representatives to Her Majesty the Queen to make it possible for a separate dissolution of any Regional House on the advice so to do of the Regional Executive Council of the Regional Ministers, this House is therefore dissolved.”

N.C.N.C. MEMBERS TOGETHER.

(Cheers from the NCNC members. The Nippers sneak away quietly under guard.) Hear! Hear! Victory for the NCNC. Nippers, shame !

SCENE 17 VICTORY STATEMENT BY MALLAM

Mallam Party men, noble and faithful NCNCers, comrades -in-arms, ladies and gentlemen.

It is not always easy for a political leader to express himself well in an atmosphere like this, when all who throng around, thousands as they number, lovers of the freedom of this great country of ours Nigeria, can hardly contain themselves as a result of joy for the great victory achieved once again.

My dear Countrymen, the events of today have brought us to another milestone in our struggle for

self-rule. I want to make it abundantly clear that this fight is not between ourselves, but between us the indigenous children of Nigeria struggling unarmed for self determination on the one hand, and the British Imperialists and their supporters on the other hand.

Many there are among the party men who stood firm and loyal throughout the crisis. Countrymen, not only that I now appeal to you to see to it that these loyal Assemblymen are returned unopposed to the House next election, but that I am also prepared, if it comes to the worst, to liquidate the Continental Bank in order to finance the electioneering Campaign of these loyal Assemblymen.
(Cheers)

Countrymen, the N.C.N.C. has decided to bear the necessary campaign expenses of these loyal Assemblymen as well as those of such other candidates that are selected by the party to contest the next election. Where all the candidates are loyal Assemblymen, no other candidates dare stand.
(Cheers)

I shall now ask you all to disperse quietly, realising that we have just finished one task to begin another. Once again, our objective is clear: Self-Government before, or in 1956, and "no question is ever settled, until it is settled right." Ladies and gentlemen, elbows to the wheel; heave, and let us be on. "Where there's a will, there's a way." "All that you do, do with your might; things done by halves, are never done right."

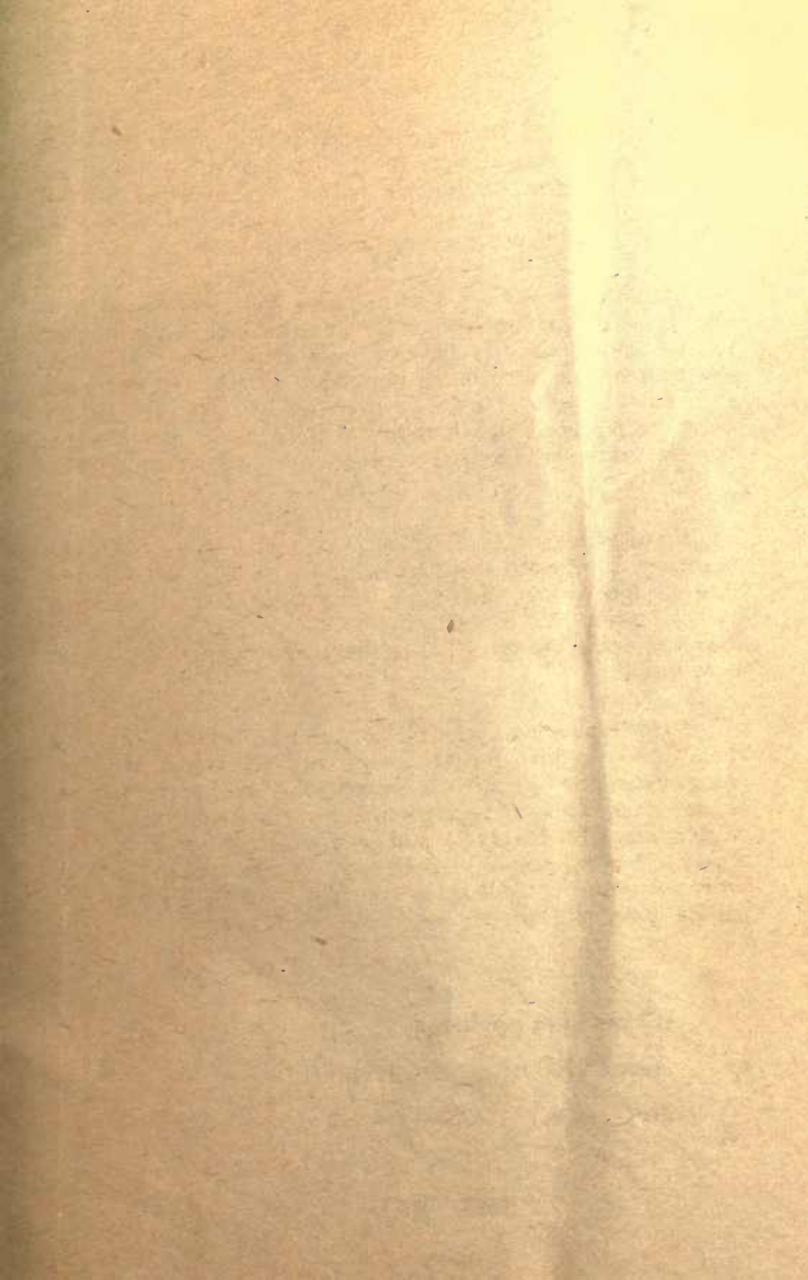
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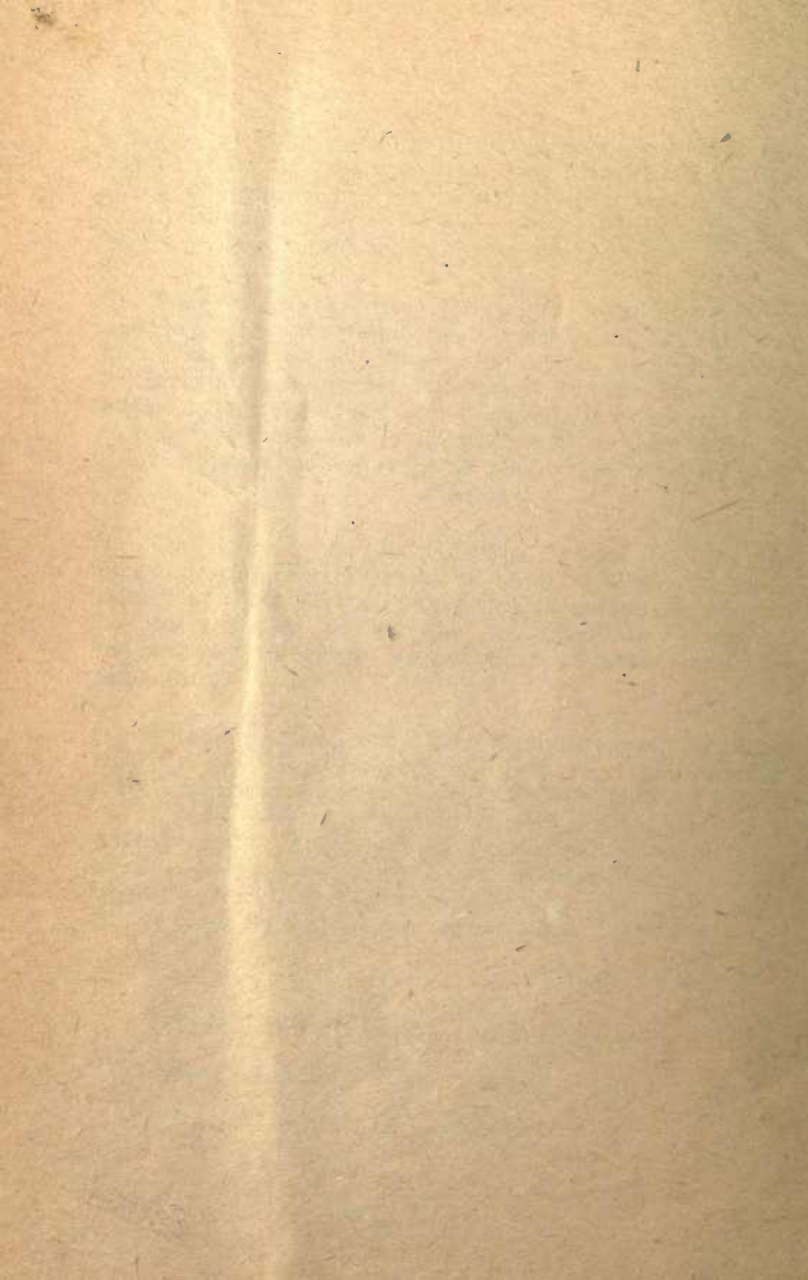
(Cheers and applause). Zee—eek-h!

Hear! Hear! Zee—eek h!!

Zee—eek-h!!! Zee—eek-h!!!!

THE END.





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